

Office Action dated: December 1, 2004
Reply filed: April 1, 2005
Art Unit 1746

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REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 4 and 8-22 are now pending in the present application. Claims 1, 10, 13 and 18 are independent. Claim 1 is amended. No new matter is involved. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Personal Interview

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the courtesies extended by Examiner Stinson to Mr. Webster, Applicants' undersigned representative, during the personal interview conducted on March 14, 2005. During that interview, Examiner Stinson indicated that he will withdraw the finality of the outstanding Office Action, dated December 1, 2004, and will consider the non-elected claims on their merits. Examiner Stinson also agreed that claim 1, as amended, patentably defines over the applied art. Examiner Stinson stated that he will have to update his prior art search, however.

Election of Species Requirement

Applicants respectfully traverse this requirement as moot, as having been withdrawn during the aforementioned interview. As noted above, Examiner Stinson stated that he will consider the non-elected claims on their merits.

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Claim Amendments

Claim 1 is amended to recite a combination of features, including a water supplying duct for supplying external water to an upper part of the inside of an inner wall of the at least one circulation duct to flow down the inner wall from said upper part and come in contact with air received in the duct to dehumidify the air in the at least one circulation duct. Support for the amendment is found throughout Applicants' originally filed disclosure including, for example, page 9, lines 7-15 of the specification. This basis for the Amendment was discussed with Examiner Stinson during the aforementioned personal interview.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102

Claims 1, 3, 4, 8 and 20, 21 and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by either UK 2,215,826, or U.S. Patent 5,146,693 to Dottor et al. (hereinafter, "Dottor"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 clearly distinguishes over either UK 2,215,826 or Dottor. Claim 1 recites a combination of features, including a water supplying duct for supplying external water to the inside of an inner wall of the at least one circulation duct to flow down the inner wall and come in contact with air received in the duct to dehumidify the air in the at least one circulation duct.

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Because claims 3, 4, 8, 20, 21 and 22 depend from claim 1, they also recite this combination of features.

Examiner Stinson agreed, at the aforementioned interview, that claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 20, 21 and 22, as amended, patentably define over either UK 2,215,826 or Dottor.

Accordingly, claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 20, 21 and 22 are not anticipated by any of the applied references.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection of claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 20, 21 and 22 is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 19 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) being unpatentable over the art applied in the rejection of claim 1, above, in view of Japan '296. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 19 depends from claim 1 and is patentable over either of the UK '826 or Dottor applied references at least for the reasons stated above in the traversal of the rejection based on claim 1. Japan '296 is not applied to provide the features missing from either of UK '826 or Dottor. So, even if it were proper to modify either of the base references in view of Japan '296, as suggested, the resulting reference combination would not meet or render obvious the claimed invention.

Moreover, Examiner Stinson agreed, at the aforementioned interview, that claim 19, which depends from amended claim 1, patentably defines over the applied art.

Accordingly, claim 19 is patentable over the applied references.

Claim 9 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over UK '286 or Dottor in view of UK 2,075,559. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 9 depends from claim 1 and is patentable over any of the applied four base references at least for the reasons stated above. UK 2,075,559 is not applied to provide the features missing from any of the four applied base references. So, even if it were proper to modify any of the base references in view of UK 2,075,559, as suggested, the resulting reference combination would not meet or render obvious the claimed invention. Moreover, Examiner Stinson agreed, at the aforementioned interview, that claim 9, which depends from amended claim 1, patentably defines over the applied art.

Accordingly, claim 9 is patentable over the applied references.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 9 and 19-21 clearly define the present invention over the references relied on by the Examiner. Accordingly, reconsideration and

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withdrawal of the Examiner's rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 are respectfully requested.

Withdrawn Claims

Claims 11, 12, 17 and 19, which depend from claim 1, are allowable over the applied art at least because of the reasons that claim 1 is allowable, as set forth above.

Claims 11 and 12 should be reinstated and examined on their merits per MPEP § 806.04(f). Moreover, Examiner Stinson stated during the aforementioned interview that the withdrawn claims would be considered.

Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of claims 11, 12, 17 and 19 is respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully submit that claim 10 is patentably distinct from the applied art. Claim 10 recites a combination of features, including an external air duct for supplying external air towards the at least one air supplying duct, said external air supplying duct having an outlet disposed in said at least one circulation duct, and an external air fan disposed at an inlet area of the external air supplying duct to draw the external air into the external air supplying duct.

As discussed at the aforementioned interview, none of the applied references disclose or suggest these features. UK '559, for example, merely discloses flowing air around the coolant coil 9.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 10 patentably defines over the applied art, and should be reinstated and allowed.

Independent claim 13 recites a combination of features including, for example, a tub cover for discharging external water supplied to the washing machine to inner walls of a first tub to dehumidify air in the first tub during the drying operation. Applicants respectfully submit that none of the applied references discloses or suggests either a tub cover for discharging external water supplied to the washing machine to inner walls of a first tub or supplying water to the inner side of a first tub that has a second tub disposed in the first tub to dehumidify air in the first tub during a drying operation, as recited.

Furthermore, none of the applied art discloses the additional feature, recited in claim 15, of a tub cover with a flow passage having a plurality of water spraying holes disposed on a bottom portion of the tub cover.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 13-16 patentably define over the applied art, and should be reinstated and allowed.

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Independent claim 18 recites a combination of features including, for example, multiple circulation ducts operatively coupled to a first tub to receive air from a second tub that is disposed within the first tub, dehumidify the air and recirculate the dehumidified air back into the second tub, and a single cooling fin having the circulation ducts pass therethrough to dehumidify air in the circulation ducts.

Applicants respectfully submit that the applied art does not disclose or suggest this combination of features.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 18 patentably defines over the applied art, and should be reinstated and allowed.

Cited but Not-Applied Art of Record

Because the remaining references cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but merely to show the state-of-the-art, no further comments are deemed necessary with respect thereto.

CONCLUSION

All the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed and/or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently pending rejections and that they be withdrawn, and that the withdrawn claims be examined on their merits.

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It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

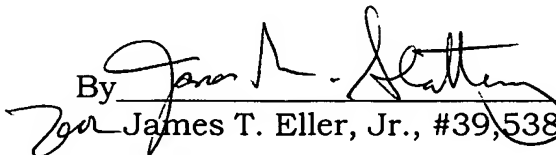
In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Robert J. Webster, Registration No. 46,472 at (703) 205-8076 in the Washington, D.C. area.


Pursuant to the provisions of 37 CFR 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicants respectfully petitions for a one (1) month extension of time for filing a response in connection with the present application. The required fee of \$110.00 is attached hereto.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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0465-0838P

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